

Cradle of Airpower Education



A Short History of The Air University,
Maxwell AFB, and the 42nd Air Base Wing

by the

Air University Directorate of History



*The Intellectual and Leadership Center
of the
U. S. Air Force*

31 July 2014

Report Documentation Page				Form Approved OMB No. 0704-0188	
Public reporting burden for the collection of information is estimated to average 1 hour per response, including the time for reviewing instructions, searching existing data sources, gathering and maintaining the data needed, and completing and reviewing the collection of information. Send comments regarding this burden estimate or any other aspect of this collection of information, including suggestions for reducing this burden, to Washington Headquarters Services, Directorate for Information Operations and Reports, 1215 Jefferson Davis Highway, Suite 1204, Arlington VA 22202-4302. Respondents should be aware that notwithstanding any other provision of law, no person shall be subject to a penalty for failing to comply with a collection of information if it does not display a currently valid OMB control number.					
1. REPORT DATE 31 JUL 2014		2. REPORT TYPE		3. DATES COVERED 00-00-2014 to 00-00-2014	
4. TITLE AND SUBTITLE A Short History of The Air University, Maxwell AFB, and the 42nd Air Base Wing				5a. CONTRACT NUMBER	
				5b. GRANT NUMBER	
				5c. PROGRAM ELEMENT NUMBER	
6. AUTHOR(S)				5d. PROJECT NUMBER	
				5e. TASK NUMBER	
				5f. WORK UNIT NUMBER	
7. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES) Air University, Directorate of History, 155 N. Twining Street, Maxwell AFB, AL, 36116				8. PERFORMING ORGANIZATION REPORT NUMBER	
9. SPONSORING/MONITORING AGENCY NAME(S) AND ADDRESS(ES)				10. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S ACRONYM(S)	
				11. SPONSOR/MONITOR'S REPORT NUMBER(S)	
12. DISTRIBUTION/AVAILABILITY STATEMENT Approved for public release; distribution unlimited					
13. SUPPLEMENTARY NOTES					
14. ABSTRACT					
15. SUBJECT TERMS					
16. SECURITY CLASSIFICATION OF:			17. LIMITATION OF ABSTRACT Same as Report (SAR)	18. NUMBER OF PAGES 23	19a. NAME OF RESPONSIBLE PERSON
a. REPORT unclassified	b. ABSTRACT unclassified	c. THIS PAGE unclassified			

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THE INTELLECTUAL AND LEADERSHIP CENTER OF THE US AIR FORCE

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Table of Contents

Origins and Early Development	3
The Air Corps Tactical School Period	3
Maxwell Field during World War II	4
Early Years of Air University	6
Air University during the Vietnam War	7
Air University after the Vietnam War	7
Air University in the Post-Cold War Era	8
Chronology of Key Events	11
Air University Commanders and Presidents	16
Maxwell Post/Base Commanders	17
Lineage and Honors: Air University	20
Lineage and Honors: 42 nd Bombardment Wing	21

*“We launch leaders of character educated to think
critically, innovatively, strategically and jointly . . .
to master and deliver superior Airpower in support of national
security objectives.”*

Origins and Early Development

The history of Maxwell Air Force Base began with Orville and Wilbur Wright, who, wanting to take advantage of their 1903 historic flight, decided in early 1910 to open a flying school to teach civilians how to fly and to promote the sale of their airplane. Wilbur, after looking at locations in Florida, came to Montgomery, Alabama. After his initial visit in February, the Wright Brothers decided to open the nation's first civilian flying school on an old cotton plantation near Montgomery that subsequently became Maxwell Air Force Base (AFB). Unfortunately, the school closed after only a few months of operation.



Wright Flying School Hanger and Maintenance Workshop, 1910



2Lt Maxwell

After the United States entered World War I in April 1917, the Army Air Service established Aircraft and Engine Repair Depot No. 3 at the former Wright flying field. The depot operations continued until early 1919. In 1921, the 22nd (later Observation) Squadron became the first major operational unit at the depot. On 8 November 1922, the War Department named the depot Maxwell Field in honor of Second Lieutenant William C. Maxwell. A native of Natchez, Alabama, Lieutenant Maxwell died on 12 August 1920 in the Philippines when his DH-4 aircraft struck a flagpole after swerving to avoid striking a group of children at play.

The 22nd Observation Squadron helped establish an airmail route between the Gulf Coast and northern Great Lakes area and the foundation of a permanent airmail service. After torrential rains caused severe flooding in southern Alabama in March 1929, Maj Walter Weaver, the Maxwell Field installation commander, ordered the squadron to fly daily airdrop missions to help the flood victims. Between 14 and 20 March, Maxwell pilots flew 346 sorties and covered approximately 60,000 miles, marking the first major operation in which US military forces airdropped relief supplies in a major civilian emergency.

The Air Corps Tactical School Period

The end of the flood relief mission marked the beginning of Maxwell's "Golden Age." In 1928, the War Department announced the relocation of the Air Corps Tactical School (ACTS) from Langley Field, Virginia, to Maxwell Field. US Congressman John Lister Hill, who had successfully removed Maxwell Field from the War Department's list of installations for closure in 1925, was instrumental in this historic decision. As a result, the number of personnel at the field grew from only 210 in the spring of 1931 to nearly 2,000 by September when the ACTS officially opened at Maxwell with 41 students.

The opening of the ACTS transformed Maxwell Field's mission from aviation training to officer education and doctrine development. The school educated senior captains and majors in military education, developed airpower doctrine for the Air Corps, and prepared Air Corps officers for attendance at the U.S. Army's Command and General Staff College. In the early years the school taught pursuit aviation as the most important airpower mission. However, by the mid-1930s, devotees of Colonel William "Billy" Mitchell had come to dominate the ACTS, and

they developed the basic concepts of high altitude, daylight precision bombing of industrial targets that became the basis for the strategic bombing of Germany and Japan during World War II.



Austin Hall, Air Corps Tactical School, 1931, now Headquarters Air University

The ACTS also established one of the Air Corps' first aerial acrobatics teams. In 1934, then Captain Claire L. Chennault, the ACTS' chief of pursuit aviation instruction, formed the "Three Men on a Flying Trapeze" to develop pursuit (fighter) tactics. In 1935, Chennault formed a second aerial demonstration team, the "Skylarks." By 1936, when the ACTS disbanded the Skylarks, both teams had performed 50 plus shows to an estimated audience of 50,000 people.

Maxwell Field during World War II

After September 1939, with war raging in Europe, the Air Corps began transforming Maxwell Field from a peacetime to a wartime base. The War Department suspended instruction at the ACTS on 30 June 1940 and closed the school on 30 June 1942. In July 1940, the existing flying training center became the Southeast Air Corps Training Center (SEACTC) (Eastern Flying Training Command after 31 July 1943), which oversaw pilot, navigator, and bombardier training for cadets at flying schools in the Southeast United States.

In 1941, further plans called for an expansion of the flying training mission. As a result, the Air Corps established an advanced flying school at Maxwell and a basic school at Montgomery's Municipal Airport. The Air Corps quickly obtained rights to the airport and renamed it Gunter Field to honor the recently deceased mayor of Montgomery, William A. Gunter. By the end of the war, these schools graduated more than 100,000 aviation cadets.



RAF cadets from Maxwell in Armistice Day parade, Montgomery AL, Nov 1941

By November 1945, the SEACTC had trained over 8,000 flight cadets of the Free French, Chinese, and other allied air forces.

With the fall of France in June 1940, Britain stood alone against Nazi Germany, and after the battle of Britain, August-September 1940, turned to the United States for assistance. President Franklin Roosevelt and the US Congress responded with the Lend-Lease Act of 11 March 1941. After Lieutenant General Henry "Hap" Arnold, Chief of the Army Air Corps (AAC), returned from a visit to Britain in April 1941, the AAC established several programs to train Royal Air Force (RAF) flight cadets in the United States, funded by Lend-Lease. Between 7 June 1941 and 17 March 1943, 4,360 of the 7,860 Britons who entered the SEACTC flight training program graduated, and 78 RAF pilot cadets died in training accidents. By November 1945, the SEACTC had trained over 8,000 flight cadets of the Free French, Chinese, and other allied air forces.

On 6 September 1941, the Air Corps Replacement Center opened at the field. To meet the replacement center's requirements, the government acquired another 60 acres and 100 additional facilities. The center provided candidates for pilot, bombardier, and navigator training with classification and preflight instruction. In mid-1942, the center became the preflight school for pilots and later expanded to include preflight training for bombardier and navigator trainees.



Cadets at Physical Training, Maxwell Field during World War II

In July 1943 the Army Air Forces (AAF) announced the opening of a specialized four-engine pilot school, initially to train air crews for the B-24 Liberator and, later, for the B-29 Superfortress. The graduates of the latter program went on to advanced training and then to conduct the strategic bombing of Japan. When the program ended in the fall of 1945, 728 B-29 crews had flown 46,554 hours and 112,809 sorties at Maxwell without a major accident.

Maxwell Field, like other AAF installations, had its own segregated African American unit, the 4th Aviation Squadron, established on 10 June 1941. Located near the Alabama River on the north edge of Maxwell Field, the present site of the federal prison camp, this segregated squadron had its own facilities. Although its official mission was stated as "security," the squadron's primary duties consisted of service as buglers, custodians, chauffeurs, drummers, foot messengers, hospital and mess hall attendants, military police, and truck drivers.



Jacqueline Cochran, Chief of the WASP, inspects women pilots at Maxwell

Women also played an important role at Maxwell during the war. In spring 1943, 156 women, assigned to the Women's Auxiliary Army Corps (WAAC) (the Women's Army Corps [WAC] after September 1943) arrived at Maxwell to serve as clerks, stenographers, radio and telephone operators, and photographic technicians. Maxwell Field also had a number of civilian pilots of the Women's Air Service Pilots (WASP) program who towed targets, assisted in the conduct of bombardment and navigation training, and transported personnel.

Early Years of Air University

With the defeat of the Axis powers, the War Department in November 1945 announced the inactivation of the Eastern Flying Training Command. To prepare Air Force personnel for the future, the AAF in 1946 (soon to be US Air Force) moved the AAF School from Orlando, Florida, to Maxwell Field (soon to be Air Force Base), renamed it the Air University (AU), and established it as a major command in Nov 1946.

Unlike the founders of other military educational institutions, the founders of AU sought to break away from traditionalism, rigid thought and doctrine, and the formalization of instruction that had often characterized past military education. The founding fathers, many of whom were graduates of the ACTS, established a progressive, forward-looking institution. Maj Gen Muir S. Fairchild, the first AU commander, stated, “We must guard rigorously against . . . accepting answers from the past instead of digging them out of the future. This is not a post-war school system--it is a pre-war school.”



**Maj Gen Fairchild, 2nd from right,
First Air University Commander**

Considerable organizational growth marked AU’s first years. AU established the Air Command and Staff School (ACSS) on 12 Mar 1946; and the Air War College (AWC) on 22 December 1948. In July 1949, the Air Force established the Human Resources Research Institute and the Extension Course Institute at Maxwell AFB and assigned the Institute of Technology (later Air Force Institute of Technology), Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, as subordinate AU units. By 1950, AU had nearly doubled its size and number of subordinate units.

The outbreak of the Korean War on 25 June 1950 interrupted AU’s growth and stability. Air Force commanders argued they needed the personnel attending AU for operational commitments and that the Air Force should close AU. However, Air Force leaders, rather than closing AU completely, decided to reduce its operations. As a result, the Air Force suspended the AWC and the Air Tactical School and reduced the length of the ACSS to less than four months.



Air Force ROTC Unit Practicing Drills

On 1 August 1952, the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps (AFROTC) joined the AU family. Overtime, AFROTC became the Air Force’s major source of new officers, providing approximately 35 percent, from 145 detachments across the United States, including Detachment 9 at Yale University, activated in October 2011 after the closure of the original Yale detachment in 1957. In October 1993, the Air Force moved the Officer Training School, which provided another 40 percent of new officers, from Lackland AFB, Texas, to Maxwell AFB. In 2009, the Air National Guard’s Academy of Military Science relocated from Tyson-McGhee ANG Base, Tennessee. By 2013, AU oversaw three of the Air Force’s four commissioning programs, collectively producing 80 percent of its newly commissioned officers.

In 1954, AU upgraded the ACSS to the Air Command and Staff College, and the Air Tactical School became the Squadron Officer School. Later, the Air Force moved all of its professional continuing education courses, except for the comptroller and logistics courses, from Craig AFB, Alabama, to Maxwell AFB. A short time later, the Gunter AFB branch of the School of Aviation Medicine became a part of AU, and the 3870th Special Activities Group followed, later renamed the Research Studies Institute.

These changes placed a heavy strain on facilities at Maxwell. In early 1951, AU officials began planning for a modern, integrated academic center that would accommodate the command's expanding educational, research, and doctrinal development requirements. Over time, Academic Circle, renamed Chennault Circle in May 1975, became home to the Squadron Officer College, the Air Command and Staff College, the Air War College, AU Library (now the Muir S. Fairchild Research and Information Center), Curtis LeMay Center for Doctrine Development and Education, and the Ira C. Eaker Center for Professional Development.

Air University during the Vietnam War



Chennault Circle in the 1970s with Air University Library in the Center

The Vietnam War era brought changes to the missions and activities at Air University. President John F. Kennedy requested that “various levels of instruction in counterinsurgency (COIN) be given to all military personnel.” As a result, the ACSC developed a two-week COIN course in 1962. By March 1963, AU transferred this course into the AU Warfare Systems School. As Air Force involvement in the Vietnam War grew in the 1960s, AU in 1968 saw a 30 percent reduction in ACSC and SOS attendance.

In 1966, the Air Force conceived of a program to evaluate the use of airpower in Southeast Asia and, in March 1979, assigned responsibility for the overall conduct of the project to the AU commander. Students and faculty at AU's schools produced numerous studies and reports for “Project Corona Harvest” on specific lessons learned in Southeast Asia from 1965 to 1968. Project Corona Harvest, phased out in October 1975, was the most ambitious effort ever undertaken by AU to study and develop airpower “lessons learned” from a conflict in progress.

With Vietnamization under President Richard M. Nixon, the US military began to draw down its forces in Southeast Asia, and the Air Force approved an increase in student enrollments for SOS, ACSC, and AWC to 60 percent or more of the pre-1964 input level. Similarly, the Air Force increased the schools' faculties and staffs in direct proportion to the growing student population, marking a return to some degree of normalcy.

Air University after the Vietnam War

The post-Vietnam War era marked a significant turning point in the history of AU. The AU re-energized its mission of “educating and producing such planners and future leaders. . . [capable of designing] an Air Force so adequate that it need never be used.” To meet this need required major changes in the command's educational system. Lt Gen Raymond B. Furlong, then AU commander, noted, “with a command motto of ‘Progress Unhindered by Tradition’ we had too often become traditionalist.” He concluded that the emphasis at AWC had drifted from how to fight an air war to high level policy and decision making and, as a result, launched a three-year campaign of curriculum review and overhaul in the mid-1970s that became known as “putting the ‘war’ back into the war college.”

During the 1970s, AU continued to grow. The Air Force established the Air Force Logistics Management Center (AFLMC) and assigned it to Air University on 1 October 1975. On that same day, the Leadership and Management Development Center (LMDC), HQ Civil Air Patrol-USAF, and the Air Force Judge Advocate General School joined the AU family. The following year, LMDC was merged with the AU Institute for Professional Development but retained its name.



Planning a Civil Air Patrol Mission

Since the establishment of AU in 1946, the Air Force leaders had discussed at various times combining Air Training Command (ATC) and AU. On 1 July 1978, AU lost major command status and became subordinate to the Air Training Command. However, in 1983, the Air Force separated AU from Air Training Command and returned AU to major command status.

In the 1980s, AU grew again. To research and analyze current and future issues of concern to the Air Force and its major commands, the Air Force established the Center (later College) for Aerospace Doctrine, Research, and Education (CADRE). In 1983, the Air Force redesignated the Academic Instructor and Foreign Officer School as the Educational Development Center, and, in 1986, merged the LMDC with the Educational Development Center. In 1987, it redesignated the consolidated schools as the Ira C. Eaker Center for Professional Development.

Congressional review of PME indicated that the DOD PME schools were not up to the expected standard. The schools needed to improve the level of education in strategic thinking, emphasize “jointness” more, and upgrade their overall quality--particularly the faculties. In response, the Air Force quickly took steps to hire highly qualified civilian instructors and established a School of Advanced Air Power Studies (SAAS) as a one-year follow-up to ACSC for selected ACSC graduates.

Secretary of the Air Force Donald B. Rice and the Chief of Staff of the Air Force General Merrill A. McPeak created a vision of an Air Force office that would inculcate the principles of total quality management across the Air Force. This concept, later known as the Quality Air Force (QAF), led to the establishment of the Air Force Quality Center on 1 August 1991 under AU at Maxwell. The center provided the Air Force with the concepts, methods, tools, and advice to aid them in attaining a QAF culture, as well as QAF education programs, consulting services, training resource materials, and related research and analysis services.



Air Force SNCO Academy Seminar at Gunter Annex

Air University in the Post-Cold War Era

In 1993, the Air Force reassigned Air University to ATC again, subsequently redesignated as the Air Education and Training Command (AETC). As a part of the restructuring, the Air Force Reserve Officer Training Corps, the Officer Training School, the Community College of the Air Force, and the First Sergeant's Academy all became AU subordinate organizations.

In 1993, Gen Merrill A. McPeak placed Air University in the unique role as the “maverick thinkers” of the Air Force. That year, he directed AU to conduct SPACECAST 2020 and Air Force 2025 to look at the Air Force’s ability to conduct warfare against future opponents while maintaining its “edge” to control the exploitation of air and space into the 21st century. SPACECAST 2020 energized the thinking and imagination of experts to produce a set of possibilities for the United States’ dominance in space. Air Force 2025 identified concepts, capabilities, and technologies required to remain the dominant air and space force into the 2000s.

AU continued to grow both in size and stature and continually reorganized to keep abreast of new technology and to meet the educational needs of all Air Force members. In 1997, the Air Force activated the Air and Space Basic Course School, later the Aerospace Basic Course (ASBC), to inspire new lieutenants in comprehending their role as Airmen who exemplified the Air Force’s core values and advocated the success and abilities that airpower brings to joint operations. Because of decreasing budgets, the Air Force inactivated the ASBC in 2012.



Lt Col Tadd Sholtis (r.) receives first Maxwell-based AU doctorate from Lt Gen David Fadok, AU Commander and President (l.), 18 Nov 2011, while Tom Brokaw, renowned correspondent (m.), looks on.

selected individuals who made significant contributions to the development of airpower or national defense. AU awarded its first honorary doctorate to Condelezza Rice, then Secretary of State and a recognized authority on international relations and national security. In 2010, AU established its first Maxwell-based doctoral program and awarded the first doctorate to Lt Col Tadd Sholtis in November 2011.

In 2006-2007, AU’s structure and program effectiveness underwent an in-depth review that led to major changes in AU’s structure. In April-July 2008, the Air Force activated the Carl Spaatz Center for Officer Education with AWC, ACSC, SOC and SAASS as subordinate units. It also redesignated the College of Enlisted Professional Military Education as the Thomas E.

Starting in the late 1990s, AU pursued degree granting authority and accreditation. In December 1999, SAASS received its accreditation from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS) to award a master’s degree. In 2000, the AU commander received authority to confer the Master of Strategic Studies degree to resident graduates of the AWC and the Master of Military Operational Art and Science degree to resident graduates of the ACSC. In 2001, SACS placed AU as an institution that offered graduate degrees on an equal basis with other accredited academic institutions. In 2008, the AU Commander established a program to award an honorary doctorate of letters or science to



Commissioning Ceremony at Officer Training School

Barnes Center for Enlisted Education with the Community College of the Air Force (CCAF), the Air Force Senior Noncommissioned Officer Academy, and the First Sergeants Academy as subordinate units. The Air Force Doctrine Development & Education Center became the Curtis LeMay Center for Doctrine Development & Education, and Air Force Officer Accessions and Training School became the Jeanne M. Holm Center for Officer Accession and Citizen Development. AU also created the Air Force Research Institute to provide independent analysis and scholarship in support of the Air Force's mission and contribution to national security.

AU continued its efforts to utilize educational technology and the internet to provide Airmen with improved educational opportunities. In June 2007, CCAF announced its Associate-to-Baccalaureate Program and by which enlisted members could use distance-learning and general courses to complete their four-year degrees. AFIT first offered a master's degree in systems engineering in March 2007, followed three months later by ACSC's offering an on-line graduate degree. On 2 Mar 2009, the CCAF initiated the General Education Mobile program by which enlisted Air Force members could complete their general education requirements toward their associate's degree through distance learning with selected colleges across the country. Since then, AU has migrated many other training and developmental education courses to the internet.


In spring 2011, the Chief of Staff of the Air Force General Norton Schwartz approved redesignating the title of the AU Commander to "Commander and President," signifying AU's growing stature as a noteworthy academic institution as well as a military education organization. Lt Gen David S. Fadok, formerly the Commander of the LeMay Center and AU Vice Commander, became the 29th Commander and the first President of AU on 12 August 2011. In early 2012, the US Congress authorized the conversion of the AFIT Commander, a general officer position, to AFIT Chancellor, a senior civilian position, to provide leadership continuity for that organization. Dr. Todd Stewart, a retired Air Force major general, became the first civilian Chancellor of AFIT on 8 May 2012.

From mid-2011 and the present, the AU continued to feel the impact of decreasing national defense budgets. For example in June 2011, AU terminated the ASBC, partially as a cost-saving measure, and inactivated the ASBC School and SOS in July 2013. It also revised the SOS program to incorporate some ASBC objectives and shorten the course back to five weeks. Additionally, the AU leadership began a concerted effort to transform officer and enlisted professional military education programs through the use of new education technologies and methods, such as blended learning and internet platforms, to improve their quality while reducing costs. In summer 2013, the CSAF Gen Mark Welsh approved these changes, and AU leaders began to operationalize these revised programs throughout FY 2014.

In addition to its education, doctrine development, officer accessions, and citizen development missions, AU, the 42nd Air Base Wing, and several tenant units have deployed several hundred military and civilian personnel annually to worldwide locations, including health care providers to Latin America and a variety of personnel to support Air Force combat operations in Southwest and Central Asia.

The Air University continues to play an important role in formulating US Air Force concepts, doctrines, and strategies for the employment of air power. Air University forms a vital link in the Air Force's overall readiness chain, and it remains a key element in building and maintaining an Air Force that is second to none.

CHRONOLOGY OF KEY EVENTS

20 Feb 1910	Wilbur Wright came to Montgomery, Alabama, looking for a site for a temporary civilian flying school.
19 Mar- 28 May 1910	The Wright brothers operated their flying school on 302 acres of land owned by Frank D. Kohn.
4 Apr 1918	Frank D. Kohn leased the same land, used by the Wright Brothers, to the US government for use as a military aviation repair depot.
Sep 1918	<div style="display: flex; align-items: center;">  <div style="margin-left: 10px;"> <p>The US Army Air Service redesignated the Engine and Repair Depot as the Engine and Plane Repair Depot #3.</p> <p>Aerial view, 1919, of Engine and Plane Repair Depot, #3</p> </div> </div>
Mar 1919	The depot became the Aviation Repair Depot.
25 Jan 1921	The Aviation Repair Depot renamed as the Montgomery Air Intermediate Depot.
30 Nov 1921	The 2 nd Observation Squadron and the 4th Photographic Section moved to Montgomery Air Intermediate Depot.
8 Nov 1922	The War Department redesignated the Montgomery Air Intermediate Depot as Maxwell Field.
Oct 1927	Construction of the first permanent buildings, a barracks (Building 836) and 13 NCO quarters, began at Maxwell Field.
1928	The Army Air Corps announced the movement of the Air Corps Tactical School (ACTS) from Langley Field, Virginia, to Maxwell Field.
14-20 Mar 1929	Maj Walter Weaver, post commander, authorized the units at Maxwell Field to provide flood aid to south Alabama.
15 Jul 1931	The ACTS formally opened at Maxwell Field.
8 Jul 1940	The War Department established the Southeast Air Corps Training Center (SEACTC), headquartered at Maxwell.
9 Sep 1940	The first basic flying training class of 120 flying cadets arrived at Maxwell. In early November, the school moved to the municipal airport (later Gunter Field).
Nov 1940	Advanced flying training began at Maxwell Field.
15 Jan 1941	The USAAF activated the 42nd Bombardment Group (Medium) at Ft. Douglas, Utah.

- 6 Sep 1941 The Air Corps Replacement Center opened.
- 9 Oct 1942 The ACTS formally closed because of the ongoing war.

Capt Glen Miller, renowned prewar big band leader, served at Maxwell Field during Dec 1942 as a special services officer.



- 23 Aug 1943 The War Department redesignated the SEATC as the Army Air Forces (AAF) Eastern Flying Training Command.
- 18 Feb 1944 General Hap Arnold conducted a meeting with many of his AAF generals at Maxwell Field. Although not called a Corona conference, the meeting was considered the first equivalent to the modern-day Corona meeting format.
- 29 Nov 1945 The AAF School transferred from Orlando, Florida, to Maxwell Field.
- 15 Dec 1945 The War Department inactivated the Eastern Flying Training Command.
- 12 Mar 1946 The War Department redesignated the AAF School as Air University (AU) and designated it as a major command.
- 1 Apr 1946 The Air University established the Air University Library (later named after Lt Gen Muir S. Fairchild, the first AU commander), which became the largest library in the Department of Defense and the largest federal government library outside of the District of Columbia.
- 10 May 1946 The USAAF inactivated the 42nd Bombardment Group (Medium).
- 14-15 Jul 1946 The Air University Board of Visitors, organized on 27 Mar 1946, held its first meeting.
- 17 Nov 1947 The 502nd Air University Wing activated as the host unit at Maxwell.
- 13 Jan 1948 Maxwell Field became Maxwell Air Force Base.
- 28 Jul 1948 AU replaced the 502nd Air University Wing with the 3800th Air University Wing.

12 Sep 1949



The USAF Historical Division, today the Air Force Historical Research Agency, moved from Washington, D.C., to Maxwell AFB. The AFHRA is presently adjacent to the Air University Library in the center of Chennault Circle

between the ACSC and AWC buildings.

1 Apr 1950

The Air Force reassigned the Institute of Technology (the Air Force Institute of Technology on 1 Jan 1962), Wright-Patterson AFB, Ohio, to Air University.

25 Feb 1953

The Air Force activated the 42nd Bombardment Wing at Loring AFB, Maine.

5 Feb 1954

A \$5 million construction project began in the Academic Circle to accommodate Air University major schools and the library.

24-25 Nov
1964

B-52s of the 42nd Bomb Wing participated in Operation Quick Kick, a flight around the perimeter of North America. The press hailed the operation as a warning to potential adversaries, particularly the Soviet Union.

17 Jan 1972

The Air Force established the Senior NCO Academy at Gunter Air Force Station (later Air Force Base) near Maxwell AFB, AL.

1 Apr 1972

The Air Force established the Community College of the Air Force which, since then, has become the largest community college in the world.

7 Mar 1975

Academic Circle renamed Chennault Circle in honor of Maj Gen Claire Lee Chennault.

1 Jul 1976

The Air Force reassigned the Civil Air Patrol–HQ US Air Force from Headquarters Command to Air University.

1 Jul 1978

AU lost major command status with its subordination to the Air Training Command.

1 Jul 1983

AU regained major command status.

31 Jan 1984


The Air Force consolidated the World War II 42nd Bombardment Group with the 42nd Bombardment Wing, established on 19 Feb 53.

4 May 1986

AU officials dedicated the Enlisted Heritage Hall at Gunter AFS (now Annex) to house the Enlisted Heritage exhibit, established in the SNCOA building in 1984.



- 30 Oct 1990 AU officials opened LeMay Plaza, Building 804, which now serves as the 42nd Air Base Wing headquarters (and named after Alabama Congressman J. Lister Hill, the “godfather of Maxwell,” on 15 Oct 1992).
- 1 Mar 1992 The Air Force redesignated Gunter AFB as Maxwell AFB/Gunter Annex.
- 1 Oct 1992 AU inactivated the 3800th Air Base Wing and replaced it with the newly activated 502nd Air Base Wing.
- 1 Jul 1993 AU became a subordinate component of Air Education and Training Command (AETC).
- 1 Sep 1993 Officer Training Squadron moved from the Medina Annex, Lackland AFB, Texas, to Maxwell AFB and became the Officer Training School (OTS).
- Nov 1993 The Air Force created the College for Enlisted Professional Military Education (now the Barnes Center) to oversee the CONUS NCO academies and the SNCO Academy and write and standardize the curricula for all Air Force enlisted PME programs.
- 1 Oct 1994 The Air Force inactivated the 502nd Air Base Wing, redesignated the 42nd Bombardment Wing (see lineage and honors statement below) as the 42nd Air Base Wing, and assigned the latter unit to Maxwell AFB.
- 17 Nov 2000 The \$35 million Ambulatory Health Care Center, which replaced the 1950s-era Maxwell Hospital (Bldg 50), opened.
- 29-30 Aug 2005
-
- After hurricane Katrina devastated New Orleans, Maxwell-Gunter served as an evacuation center for over 1,000 displaced evacuees from the Gulf coast and as a Federal Emergency Management Agency staging area for relief convoys to the affected areas.
- 1 Oct 2006 The Air Force assigned the Air Force Doctrine Center, later renamed the Curtis E. LeMay Center for Doctrine Development and Education, to Air University.
- Feb 2007 The AU began the pilot testing of the Associate-to-Baccalaureate Cooperative (AU-ABC) program in which AU and civilian higher education institutions partner to provide Air Force enlisted members with awarded AU associate degrees the opportunity to complete the requirements for their bachelor’s degree.
- 14 Apr 2008 AU awarded its first honorary doctoral degree to Condelezza Rice, then Secretary of State and a recognized authority on international relations and national security.
- 2 Mar 2009 The CCAF initiated the General Education Mobile program by which Air Force members could complete their general education requirements toward their associate’s degree through distance learning with selected community

	colleges across the United States.
1 Oct 2009	The Air Force realigned the National Security Space Institute, Peterson AFB, Colorado, under Air University and assigned it to the Eaker Center.
1 Oct 2009	The Air National Guard (ANG) relocated its officer accessions training program from McGhee-Tyson ANG Base, Tennessee, to Maxwell AFB, giving AU oversight of all of the Air Force's officer accessions training programs except for the US Air Force Academy.
6 May 2010	The AU Commander Lt Gen Allen Peck dedicated the new Air Force Chaplains' Corps College, formerly the US Air Force Chaplain's Service Institute, relocated from Maxwell AFB to Fort Jackson, South Carolina, as part of the consolidation of the chaplain and religious education and training programs of all three military services into one facility, the Armed Forces Chaplaincy Center.
5 Aug 2011	At the beginning of the 2011-2012 school term, the Maxwell Elementary School became the Maxwell Middle School with the addition of the 7 th and 8 th grades.
12 Aug 2011	Lt Gen David S. Fadok became the 29 th commander of Air University and its first president.
9 Oct 2011	The Air Force activated AFROTC Detachment 9 at Yale University, its first AFROTC since the inactivation of the original detachment in 1957. On 21 Sep 2012, the detachment began instruction for 38 cadets.
18 Nov 2011	AU awarded its first Maxwell-based doctoral degree to Lt Col Tadd Sholtis, the deputy director of public affairs at Headquarters Air Combat Command at Langley AFB, Virginia.
8 May 2012	Dr. Todd Stewart, a retired Air Force major general, became the first civilian Chancellor of AFIT.
	
Nov 2012	The Community College of the Air Force awarded its 400,000 degree to Senior Airman Emily Barchenger, assigned to Ellsworth AFB, South Dakota.
1 Jul 2013	The Air Force inactivated the ASBC School, the SOS, and two training squadrons associated with the inactivated schools.
1 Dec 2013	The Air Force reactivated the 42nd Comptroller Squadron.

AIR UNIVERSITY COMMANDERS AND PRESIDENTS

Maj Gen Muir S. Fairchild	6 Feb 46
Maj Gen Robert W. Harper	17 May 48
Gen George C. Kenney	1 Nov 48
Lt Gen Idwal H. Edwards	.1 Aug 51
Lt Gen Laurence S. Kuter	15 Apr 53
Lt Gen Dean G. Strother	14 May 55
Lt Gen Walter E. Todd	25 Aug 58
Lt Gen Troup Miller, Jr.	1 Aug 61
Lt Gen Ralph Swofford, Jr.	1 Jan 64
Lt Gen John W. Carpenter III	1 Aug 65
Lt Gen Albert P. Clark	1 Aug 68
Lt Gen Alvan C. Gillem II	1 Aug 70
Lt Gen Felix M. Rogers	1 Nov 73
Lt Gen Raymond B. Furlong	15 Aug 75
Lt Gen Stanley M. Umstead, Jr.	1 Jul 79
Lt Gen Charles G. Cleveland	1 Aug 81
Lt Gen Thomas C. Richards	1 Aug 84
Lt Gen Truman Spangrud	6 Nov 86
Lt Gen Ralph E. Havens	12 Jul 88
Maj Gen David C. Reed	7 Oct 89
Lt Gen Charles G. Boyd	4 Jan 90
Lt Gen Jay W. Kelley	29 Oct 92
Lt Gen Joseph R. Redden	1 Oct 96
Lt Gen Lance W. Lord	22 Jun 99
Lt Gen Donald A. Lamontagne	8 May 01
Lt Gen John R. Regni	8 Jul 04
Lt Gen Stephen R. Lorenz	12 Oct 05
Lt Gen Allen G. Peck	16 Jun 08
Lt Gen David S. Fadok (First AU President)	12 Aug 11

MAXWELL POST/BASE COMMANDERS

Pre-World War II Post Commanders

Maj Stiles M. Decker	7 Jul 18
Maj Louis R. Knight	14 Dec 18
Col William L. Patterson	Unknown
Maj Louis R. Knight	Unknown
Unknown	Unknown
Maj Frank D. Lackland	Feb 20
Maj William J. Fitzmaurice	Apr 21
Maj Roy S. Brown	May 22
Maj Harrison H. Richards	26 Jun 25
Maj Walter R. Weaver	1 Aug 27
Maj John F. Curry	11 Aug 31
Col Arthur G. Fisher	29 Aug 35
Brig Gen Henry C. Pratt	17 Mar 37
Col Albert L. Sneed	8 Aug 38
Col John H. Pirie	4 Oct 38
Col Douglas B. Netherwood	5 Feb 39
Col Walter R. Weaver	1 Apr 39
Lt Col Floyd E. Galloway	20 Aug 40
Col Albert L. Sneed	12 Feb 41

World War II Post Commanders, 8 Dec 1941

Col Elmer J. Bowling	27 Jan 42
Col Robert E. Choate	14 Jul 44
Brig Gen William S. Gravely	29 Aug 44
Col Robert E. Choate	6 Dec 44
Col William E. Covington, Jr.	8 Oct 45
Col Richard H. Ballard	12 Nov 45
Col William E. Covington, Jr.	13 Jan 46

502nd Air University Wing, 17 Nov 1947

Col Sidney D. Grubbs, Jr.	17 Jun 48
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3800th Air University/Air Base Wing, 28 Jul 48

Col Leslie G. Mulzer	8 Jan 49
Col Stoyte O. Ross	1 Nov 51
Col James P. Newberry	2 Jun 52
Col James G. Pratt	28 Mar 53
Col Mills S. Savage	1 Nov 55
Col Clyde C. Harris, Jr.	5 May 58
Col William J. Wrigglesworth	1 Jun 61
Col Wilson R. Wood	1 Aug 63
Col Rudolph B. Walters	12 Jan 67
Col Paul A. Jones	2 Apr 68
Col Lattie A. Ritter, Jr.	26 Jan 70
Col Charles G. Weber	16 Aug 70
Col Andrew J. Chapman	13 Nov 72
Col James H. Hiley	15 Jun 74
Col David T. Stockman	18 Aug 75
Col Robert D. Hartwig	1 Sep 78
Col Roger W. McLain	1 Jun 79
Col William D. Palmer	7 Jul 80
Col Donald F. Brackett	15 Apr 82
Col Vardaman F. Johnson	1 Jul 83
Col Mark J. Dierlam	25 Mar 85
Col David J. Vogl	20 Jun 88
Col Gerald R. Adams	18 Jun 91

502nd Air Base Wing, 1 Oct 92

Brig Gen Albert D. Jensen	4 Aug 93
Brig Gen Thomas C. Waskow	9 Aug 94

42nd Air Base Wing, 1 Oct 94

Col William S. Cole, Jr.	7 May 96
Col Albert A. Allenback	26 May 98
Col Frances C. Martin	12 Jul 01
Col John A. Neubauer	11 Jul 03

Col Peter A. Costello	19 Jul 05
Col Paul H. McGillicuddy	20 Mar 07
Col Kristin D. Beasley	29 Aug 08
Col Brian M. Killough	12 Jul 10
Col Trent H. Edwards	28 Jun 12
Col Andrea D. Tullos	30 May 14

LINEAGE AND HONORS OF The Air University

Lineage. Established as Field Officers School on 30 Oct 1920. Activated Nov 1920. Redesignated as: Air Service Field Officers' School on 10 Feb 1921; Air Service Tactical School on 8 Nov 1922; Air Corps Tactical School on 18 Aug 1926. Discontinued on 9 Oct 1942. Consolidated (26 Apr 1944) with the Army Air Forces School of Applied Tactics, which was established on 16 Oct 1943. Activated on 1 Nov 1943. Redesignated as Army Air Forces School on 1 Jun 1945. Redesignated as Air University on 12 Mar 1946, as a major command. Lost major command status on 1 Jul 1978. Regained major command status on 1 Jul 1983. Lost major command status on 1 Jul 1993.

Assignments. Army Air Forces, 1920-9 Oct 1942. Army Air Forces Tactical Center (later, Army Air Forces Center), 1 Nov 1943; Army Air Forces, 29 Nov 1945; United States Air Force, 18 Sep 1947; Air Training Command, 15 May 1978; United States Air Force, 1 Jul 1983; Air Education and Training Command, 1 Jul 1993-.

Stations. Langley Field, VA, 1920; Maxwell Field, AL, 15 Jul 1931-9 Oct 1942. Orlando, FL, 1 Nov 1943; Maxwell Field (later, Maxwell AFB), AL, 29 Nov 1945.

Service Streamers. World War II American Theater.

Campaign Streamers. None.

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers. None.

Decorations. Air Force Organizational Excellence Awards: 1 Jul 1986-30 Jun 1988; 1 Jul 1990-30 Jun 1992; 1 Jul 1992-30 Jun 1993; 1 Jul 1993-30 Jun 1995; 18 Mar 1997-30 Jun 1998; 1 Jul 1998-30 Jun 2000; 1 Jul 2000-30 Jun 2002; 1 Jul 2002-30 Jun 2004; 1 Jul 2004-30 Jun 2006; 1 Jul 2006-30 Jun 2008; 1 Jul 2008-30 Jun 2010.

Emblem. Approved on 9 Dec 1929. Modified on 2 May 1999.

LINEAGE AND HONORS OF THE 42nd Air Base Wing

Lineage. Established as 42 Bombardment Group (Medium) on 20 Nov 1940. Activated on 15 Jan 1941. Redesignated 42 Bombardment Group, Medium, on 6 Sep 1944. Inactivated on 10 May 1946. Consolidated (31 Jan 1984) with the 42 Bombardment Wing, Heavy, which was established on 19 Feb 1953. Activated on 25 Feb 1953. Redesignated: 42 Wing on 1 Sep 1991; 42 Bomb Wing on 1 Jun 1992. Inactivated on 30 Sep 1994. Redesignated 42 Air Base Wing and activated on 1 Oct 1994.

Assignments. Northwest Air District (later, Second Air Force), 16 Jan 1941 (attached to 20 Bombardment Wing, 16 Jan–1 Sep 1941); 2 (later, II) Bomber Command, 5 Sep 1941; IV Bomber Command, 25 Jan 1942; XIII Bomber Command, 14 Mar 1943 (attached to 308 Bombardment Wing, Heavy, c. 24 Aug–2 Sep 1944; 310 Bombardment Wing, Medium, 3–c. 14 Sep 1944; Thirteenth Air Task Force, c. 15–30 Sep 1944; XIII Fighter Command, 1 Oct 1944–8 Jan 1945; XIII Bomber Command Rear Echelon, 9 Jan–21 Feb 1945; XIII Fighter Command, c. 22 Mar–c. Sep 1945); Fifth Air Force, 25 Dec 1945; 310 Bombardment Wing, Medium, 31 Jan 1946; V Fighter Command, 25 Mar–10 May 1946. Eighth Air Force, 25 Feb 1953; 45 Air Division, 8 Oct 1954 (attached to 7 Air Division, 18 Oct–18 Nov 1955); Eighth Air Force, 18 Jan 1958; 45 Air Division, 1 Dec 1958; Eighth Air Force, 29 Mar 1989; Ninth Air Force, 1 Jun 1992–30 Sep 1994. Air University, 1 Oct 1994–.

Stations. Ft Douglas, UT, 15 Jan 1941; Gowen Field, ID, c. 3 Jun 1941; McChord Field, WA, c. 18 Jan 1942–15 Mar 1943; Fiji Islands, 22 Apr 1943 (air echelon); Carney Field, Guadalcanal, 11 May 1943 (ground echelon), 6 Jun 1943 (air echelon); Russell Islands, c. 21 Oct 1943; Stirling Island, 20 Jan 1944; Hollandia, Dutch New Guinea, 24 Aug 1944 (air echelon); Cape Sansapor, Dutch New Guinea, 24 Aug 1944 (ground echelon), c. 15 Sep 1944 (air echelon); Morotai, Philippines, 23 Feb 1945 (air echelon); Puerto Princesa, Palawan Island, Mar 1945; Itami Airfield, Japan, 31 Jan–10 May 1946. Limestone (later, Loring) AFB, ME, 25 Feb 1953–30 Sep 1994. Maxwell AFB, AL, 1 Oct 1994–.

Aircraft. B–18, 1941–1942; B–26, 1941–1942, 1943; A–29, 1942–1943; B–25, 1942, 1943–1945; A–26, 1946; A–20, 1946. B–36, 1953–1956; KC–97, 1955–1957; B–52, 1956–1993; KC–135, 1957–1992.

Operations. Began training in B–26s, Oct 1941–Jan 1942. Patrolled the Northwest Pacific Coast and trained B–25 combat crews for the Alaskan Defense Command. Arrived in New Caledonia in Apr 1943. Entered combat in Jun 1943, operating from Guadalcanal, and later from other bases in the Solomon Islands. Attacked Japanese airfields, personnel areas, gun positions, and shipping. Jan–Jul 1944, engaged primarily in the neutralization of enemy airfields and harbor facilities on New Britain, but also supported ground forces on Bougainville and attacked shipping in the northern Solomon and the Bismarck Islands. Aug 1944–Jan 1945, bombed airfields and installations on New Guinea, Celebes, and Halmahera, and flew reconnaissance missions. Moved to the Philippines in Feb–Mar 1945. Attacked shipping along the China coast, struck targets in French Indochina, bombed airfields and installations in the Philippines, and supported ground operations on Mindanao. Also supported Australian forces on Borneo during May and Jun 1945.

Received a Distinguished Unit Citation for its pre-invasion bombing of Balikpapan, 23–30 Jun 1945. Ended combat service by attacking isolated Japanese units on Luzon, Jul–Aug 1945. 42 Bombardment Wing activated at Limestone AFB in 1953 and began operational training in Apr. All squadrons were flying by Aug. In 1954 and 1955, portions of the wing twice deployed at Upper Heyford and Burtonwood, England, and the entire wing deployed to Upper Heyford, 18 Oct–18 Nov 1955. Gained an air refueling mission in 1955 and B–52 bombers in 1956. Operated out of Ramey AFB, Puerto Rico (bombers), and Goose AB, Labrador (tankers), while runway repairs were made at Loring, 10 Jul–5 Oct 1959. Supported SAC’s bombardment and air refueling operations in Southeast Asia from the mid-1960s to mid-1975, furnishing aircraft, aircrews, and at times support personnel to other units. Participated in strategic and tactical exercises worldwide and supported USAF needs for air refueling after 1975. Won the Omaha Trophy as “the outstanding wing in SAC for 1977.” Deployed personnel, aircraft and equipment to Southwest Asia, 7 Aug 1990 – c. 12 Apr 1991. Began preparations for closure of Loring AFB in Oct 1991. Lost air refueling mission in Jun 1992. Last wing B-52 departed Loring on 18 Nov 1993. After 1 Oct 1994, served as the host unit for Maxwell-Gunter AFB, providing personnel management, communications, financial services, logistics support, health care, safety and force protection, and maintenance and modernization of base facilities for Air University, the 908th Airlift Wing (Air Force Reserve); the Business and Enterprise Systems Directorate (Air Force Materiel Command); more than 30 tenant units; and over 10,000 military retirees in Central Alabama. Prepared Airmen to deploy in support of worldwide US military operations and deployed military and civilian members to a variety of operations, including Operations Northern Watch, Southern Watch, Enduring Freedom and Iraqi Freedom, across the globe.

Service Streamers. None.

Campaign Streamers. *World War II:* Antisubmarine, American Theater; New Guinea; Northern Solomons; Bismarck Archipelago; Western Pacific; Leyte; Luzon; Southern Philippines; China Defensive; China Offensive. *Southwest Asia:* Defense of Saudi Arabia; Liberation and Defense of Kuwait.

Armed Forces Expeditionary Streamers. None.

Decorations. Distinguished Unit Citation: Balikpapan, Borneo, 23–30 Jun 1945. Air Force Outstanding Unit Award: 1 Jul 1986–30 Jun 1988; 1 Jun 1994–30 Jun 1995; 1 Jul 1995–30 Jun 1996; 1 Jul 1996–30 Jun 1997; 1 Jul 1999–30 Jun 2000; 1 Jul 2001–30 Jun 2002; 1 Jul 2002–30 Jun 2004; 1 Jul 2004–30 Jun 2006; 1 Jul 2006–30 Jun 2007; 1 Jul 2010–30 Jun 2011. Philippine Presidential Unit Citation.

Emblem. Approved on 11 Mar 1942; modified on 19 Mar 1997.



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We launch leaders of character educated to think
critically, innovatively, strategically and jointly . . .
to master and deliver superior Airpower in support of national
security objectives.”*